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U. S. OVERSEAS MILITARY BASESNational Security Council Comments
on the Main Issues of the Nash ReportMAIN THESIS1. Present and Future Need for the Base System.

Statement of the Issue (Report, pp. 4-5, 7-13): Our base* system is key to our survival as a nation. During the next ten years, despite changes in weapons technology, our overseas base system will remain essential (a) to maintain and disperse our deterrent to general war; (b) to maintain tactical forces to deter and cope with local aggression; and (c) to support foreign policy objectives. The general scope and pattern of our base system are not likely to diminish in size and complexity during this period, and a net increase will probably be required, at least initially, to accommodate new weapons, to meet new Soviet offensive techniques, and to disperse. Adjustments and shifts in emphasis will occur as we adjust our strategic doctrine to new weapons, improvements in the mobility and firepower of our tactical forces, and the political or military vulnerability of particular overseas areas. The central problem, therefore, is how the United States can maintain substantially its present overseas base complex over the next ten years, recognizing that to maintain it calls for a positive but flexible approach in our relations with our allies, and in the formulation and administration of our own policies.

Same National Security Council Comment: Progressively the situation, as affected by tremendous developments in weapons technology and other factors, is going to change rapidly over the next ten years the need for our present overseas base system. Accordingly, while an overseas base system will most probably remain essential (a) to maintain and disperse our deterrent to general war, (b) to maintain forces to deter and cope with local aggression, and (c) to support foreign policy objectives; each year the then-existing base system should be reviewed. In fact, a small net expansion of our base system may be required, at least initially, to accommodate new weapons and to meet Soviet offensive techniques.

* The word "base" is used in its broadest sense to cover the installations and deployments of all elements of the U. S. ground, sea and air forces located outside the territory of the United States.

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OTHER CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS2. IRBM's Around the Sino-Soviet Periphery.

Statement of the Issue (Report, pp. 7-10): In view of the prospective Soviet ICBM capability and the resulting vast increase in the vulnerability of the continental United States, our ability to retain the edge in the deterrent race requires the positioning of IRBM's at widely-dispersed bases around the Sino-Soviet periphery.

Such positioning must be carefully planned to avoid pressing the Sino-Soviet bloc to the point that may incline it to miscalculate our objectives and conclude that our intentions have become aggressive, thereby making it feel obliged to react violently. Because the untested state of the IRBM's prevents us from placing full reliance on them and reducing our dependence on the manned bomber, and because existing air bases will not always be the most suitable IRBM locations, the IRBM program will necessitate some enlargement of our overseas base system.

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National Security Council Comment: In view of the prospective Soviet ICBM capability and the resulting increase in the vulnerability of the continental United States, our continued ability to deter general war will be better ensured by the positioning of IRBM's in selected areas around the Sino-Soviet periphery. Such positioning must be carefully planned to avoid pressing the Sino-Soviet bloc to the point that may incline it to miscalculate our objectives and conclude that our intentions have become aggressive, thereby making it feel obliged to react violently. The implications of positioning IRBM's around the Sino-Soviet periphery outside the NATO area are of such import that a decision to do so should be made through NSC procedures, only in light of the over-all advantages and disadvantages.

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3. Western Mediterranean Pact.

Statement of the Issue (Report, p. 45): Because experience to date with our various mutual security arrangements has demonstrated that they afford the most enduring cement for our overseas base complex, immediate and thorough consideration should be given to the feasibility of a Western Mediterranean defense arrangement embracing Spain, France, Italy, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya.

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National Security Council Comment: Consideration is being given by the Departments of State and Defense to the feasibility and desirability of a Western Mediterranean defense arrangement embracing Spain, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya.

4. A New Base Chain in Central Africa.

Statement of the Issue (Report, p. 25): In light of the exposed position of our bases to the north, the technological developments in the long-range plane and missile fields, and the objective of getting a political "foot-in-the-door" in rapidly-developing Central Africa, we should seriously consider, from both the political and military points of view, whether a line of "back bases" across the waist of Africa, with Ethiopia as its eastern terminus, would be worth the cost involved.

? National Security Council Comment: The United States should not, at this time, establish a line of "back bases" across the waist of Africa; but should, in accordance with NSC 5719/1, keep the area under periodic survey to determine any changes in our strategic requirements, and develop political accommodation that would promote assurance of early success if base rights are needed in the future.

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5. Alternative Bases in the Far East.

Statement of the Issue (Report, pp. 27-28, 36): In view of the weaknesses in our present Far East defense perimeter and the increased threat inherent in Soviet missile achievements, alternatives to our present base system should be examined for the dual purpose of increasing dispersion and of establishing bases in the most politically reliable areas.

Such a program would be costly, but the alternative to a soundly-based defense perimeter in the West Pacific is a retreat to "Fortress America" which would be infinitely more costly in every respect. It is not a question of withdrawing entirely from any country. This would be considered by our friends as abandonment, and they would feel compelled to make concessions to the Communists even while pursuing a policy of neutralism. The need is for alternate positions which will protect us by dispersion and afford insurance against a situation developing in the present host countries that would lead us to a decision to withdraw. There are a number of good possibilities--The Bonins, the Marianas, Ulithi, North Borneo, Brunei, and Australia.

National Security Council Comment: Because of weaknesses in our present Far East defense perimeter and the increased threat inherent in Soviet missile achievements, the Department of Defense should continue to study the desirability and feasibility of alternatives to our present bases in the area as a means of increasing dispersal and establishing bases in the most politically reliable areas.

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6. Postwar Stockpile in Australia.

Statement of the Issue (Report, p. 28): Because of her remote geographical position, consideration should be given to transferring to Australia a portion of our "moth-balled" merchant fleet, and to establishing stockpiles of surplus grain and other provisions there.

If, as seems likely, the aftermath of an atomic war involving Europe, Russia, and the United States would be characterized by acute shortages of food and transport, it would seem prudent to develop now a reserve stockpile of both in a place relatively secure from the immediate consequences of a global atomic conflict.

National Security Council Comment: The United States should not in the foreseeable future transfer to Australia a portion of our "moth-balled" merchant fleet or establish stockpiles of surplus grain and other provisions there. However, studies under NSC 5802/1, paragraphs 3 and 23, should be made on placing a portion of our "moth-balled" merchant fleet and stockpiling surplus grain and other provisions in areas outside the continental United States.

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7. The Organization of American States.

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Statement of the Issue (Report, p. 46): Greater use should be made of the OAS and its military organs to provide a collective security framework for U. S. bases in Latin America. In this connection, it is further recommended that early consideration be given to the desirability of bringing the now-developing West Indies Federation into the OAS.

While it does not seem practicable at this time to consider the adoption of an infrastructure program for the OAS (similar to that in NATO), nevertheless the establishment of a framework of hemispheric defense in place of the present framework of unilateral U. S. interests would do much to relieve the U. S. of such difficulties as those recently encountered with Brazil in securing a small area for use in the guided missile testing range, and those presently involved in the efforts to obtain from Panama a limited amount of real estate for radar facilities. If the incorporation of the West Indies Federation into the OAS should be found impracticable, consideration might be given to the development of a Caribbean security grouping.

National Security Council Comment: Any additional or more substantial collective security framework for Latin America would, on balance, be infeasible and undesirable at this time. Consideration should be given to bringing the West Indies Federation into the OAS at an appropriate time.

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8. Criminal Jurisdiction

Statement of the Issue (Report, pp. 53, 58-60, 63):
Except as may be specifically determined to the contrary by the Secretaries of State and Defense, U. S. forces should not in the future be stationed in peacetime on any additional foreign territory unless satisfactory arrangements on criminal jurisdiction--i.e., in substance the NATO Status of Forces Agreement as a minimum--have been made in advance. Where existing agreements fall below satisfactory standards in terms and practice, they should be renegotiated at the earliest practicable time. Where U. S. forces are now stationed on foreign territory without any status arrangements and host governments refuse to agree to such arrangements, U. S. forces should be withdrawn unless the Secretaries of State and Defense jointly determine that overriding national interest demands their continued presence. The Executive Branch should undertake an urgent, intensive, and continuous effort to inform and explain to the American people and its representatives in Congress the nature and facts of U. S. policy in regard to criminal jurisdiction.

The exercise of criminal jurisdiction over American servicemen abroad is a relatively new problem resulting from the peacetime stationing of large numbers of troops in friendly countries. The issue has not yet seriously affected U. S. military operations, Free World solidarity, or other U. S. national objectives and policies, but potentially it contains the seeds of serious danger.

National Security Council Comments: The objective of the United States should be to obtain criminal jurisdiction arrangements, with all countries in which U. S. forces are stationed now or in the future, at least as favorable as those contained in the NATO Status of Forces Agreement. U. S. forces should not be stationed on foreign territory unless protected by criminal jurisdiction arrangements at least equal in substance to the NATO Status of Forces Agreement, except on determination by the Secretaries of State and Defense that overriding national interest demands their presence notwithstanding the absence of satisfactory arrangements.

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9. Sharing Defense Responsibilities with Canada.

Statement of the Issue (Report, p. 19): The United States should enable Canada to assume a growing share of the responsibilities for defending North America and the North Atlantic.

cc Although our base relationships are generally excellent, and Canada realizes how closely her existence is identified with that of the United States, both within and without NATO, there is a growing Canadian sensitivity and feeling of national destiny that will spell trouble for us if we do not take every step we can to give Canada a practical sense of equality with the United States, particularly in defense matters. Further, the manifold problems inherent in providing further operational arming of RCAF aircraft with nuclear weapons must be solved.

5149 { National Security Council Comment: The Departments of State and Defense and the Office of Defense Mobilization should study and report to the National Security Council on the need for and possible scope of a statement of policy on U. S. relations with Canada.

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